

Missouri Libraries & Seniors

**The Task Force on Library
Services for Older Adults**

Background...

The Missouri State Library, recognizing the population explosion of adults 60 and over in Missouri, and that libraries and librarians play a crucial role in serving Missouri senior citizens, convened a Task Force on Library Services for Older Adults in 1997. The charge of this task force was to:

- identify the issues of providing library services to older adults
- define the needs of seniors in libraries
- identify the rewards and barriers to providing services to individuals aged 65 or over
- promote planning in libraries and other agencies to provide and enhance senior services and cooperative projects
- develop a plan for presentation to the Secretary's Council on Library Development

In April 1999, the Task Force's plan was approved and adopted by the Secretary of State. *Libraries & Seniors – Strengthening Services for Older Missourians: The Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Library Services for Older Adults* was printed and distributed to Missouri public libraries and relevant state agencies and organizations.

Recommendations...

1. Target improvement of planning library services for seniors, and recognize libraries that implement effective and innovative programs. Among projects scheduled:
 - ❑ Resource manual
 - ❑ Regional training
 - ❑ Annual awards to recognize libraries providing innovative services to seniors
2. Make sure seniors get the message about library services in appealing ways; provide libraries with tools and training for marketing their services. Planned projects:
 - ❑ Marketing kit for libraries
 - ❑ Statewide marketing effort
 - ❑ Enhanced relationships between libraries and seniors through technology
3. Use federal and state grant funds to further the development of library services for seniors. Already in place:
 - ❑ Cooperative grants for libraries, funded through the Library Services and Technology Act
 - ❑ Library Services and Technology Act grants for adaptive and assistive devices to improve information access

Missouri libraries serve seniors

- Computer training / Internet training
- Book delivery services to homebound adults
- Bookmobile visits to nursing homes and senior centers
- Humanities programs
- Book discussion groups
- Free email accounts for senior adults
- Writing classes for senior adults
- Senior computer clubs
- Genealogy programs
- Speaking opportunities
- Storytelling classes for older adults
- Adaptive devices and software for computers and other technology
- Large print books and books on tape
- Volunteer opportunities
- Intergenerational programming

*Visit your local library to find out
more!*

Missouri State Library projects

In addition to the activities named by the Task Force, the State Library has also been involved in the following activities to enhance services to seniors in public libraries...

- provided \$499,385 in federal funds to public libraries for the purchase of assistive technology software and devices
- conducted a full-day conference on intergenerational programming for youth and adult services librarians
- purchased *Intergenerational Programming: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians* for all Missouri public libraries
- offered a week-long advanced series class on **Library Services for Older Adults** during the 1999 Library Skills Summer Institute
- awarded federal grant funds to school libraries and public libraries conducting cooperative programs or services targeting seniors

The complete text of *Libraries & Seniors – Strengthening Services for Older Missourians: The Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Library Services for Older Adults* is available on the Missouri State Library website at:

<http://mosl.sos.state.mo.us/lib-ser/libdev/libsandseniors.html>

or by contacting:

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